

Message Text

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15

ACTION AF-07

INFO OCT-01 EUR-08 ISO-00 IO-04 CU-02 SCCT-01 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-05 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01

RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 /065 W

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R 211545Z OCT 74

FM AMEMBASSY CAPE TOWN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4092

INFO AMCONSUL DURBAN

AMEMBASSY GABORONE

AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY MASERU

AMEMBASSY MBABANE

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

USUN NEW YORK 880

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINS, SF

SUBJ: DETENTION OF SASO AND BPC MEMBERS

REF: DURBAN 366 AND PREVIOUS

1. DETENTION OF AT LEAST 26 MEMBERS OF SOUTH AFRICAN STUDENTS ORGANIZATION (SASO) AND BLACK PEOPLES CONVENTION (BPC) HAS NOT BEEN GIVEN MUCH ATTENTION BY PRESS OR POLITICIANS IN SOUTH AFRICA. SAD BUT TRUE, THIS WOULD NOT BE CASE IF DETAINEES WERE WHITE.

2. CONGEN DURBAN HAS POINTED OUT THAT ABORTIVE PRO-FRELIMO RALLY WHICH LED TO DETENTIONS WAS SYMPTOMATIC OF GROWING IMPATIENCE OF DURBAN BLACKS, AND ALSO THAT COST FOR YOUNG BLACK ORGANIZERS WAS HIGH (A-101, OCTOBER 9). NUMBER OF

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DETENTIONS AND FACT THAT DRACONIAN FEATURES OF TERRORISM ACT

HAVE BEEN INVOKED ATTEST TO FACT THAT COST INDEED HIGH.

3. PERIOD LEADING UP TO SOUTH AFRICA'S GENERAL ELECTION LAST APRIL WAS MARKED BY INCREASED REPRESSION BY SAG OF "RADICAL" OPPOSITION TO ITS POLICIES AND PRACTICES. TEMPO OF REPRESSION SUBSIDED SOMEWHAT AFTER ELECTION. HOWEVER, MEASURES TAKEN AGAINST SASO AND BPC ILLUSTRATE ONCE AGAIN THAT WHEN SAG BELIEVES THREAT TO SOUTH AFRICA'S INTERNAL SECURITY EXISTS, IT WILL NOT HESITATE TO ACT SWIFTLY AND AS HARSHLY AS IT DEEMS NECESSARY. IN SUCH INSTANCES, ADVERSE EFFECT ON RACE RELATIONS AND ON OPINION ABROAD RECEIVES SECONDARY CONSIDERATION AT BEST.

4. BECAUSE OF RECENT MANIFESTATIONS OF SAG'S CONCERN FOR IMPROVING ITS RELATIONS WITH AFRICAN GOVERNMENTS, ITS USE OF TERRORISM ACT IS EITHER ERRANT SHORTSIGHTEDNESS, AN OVERRIDING FEAR THAT SASO AND BPC ACTIVITIES WERE GETTING OUT OF HAND AND COULD HAVE STIMULATED WIDESPREAD DISORDER AMONG BLACKS, OR COMBINATION OF BOTH. IN ANY EVENT, VORSTER GOVERNMENT HAS MADE IT CLEAR AGAIN THAT WHATEVER CHANGES COME TO SOUTH AFRICA'S RACIAL SITUATION, IT INTENDS TO EXERCISE TIGHT CONTROL OVER MANNER, PACE AND EXTENT OF ANY MODIFICATIONS TO STATUS QUO.
HURD

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